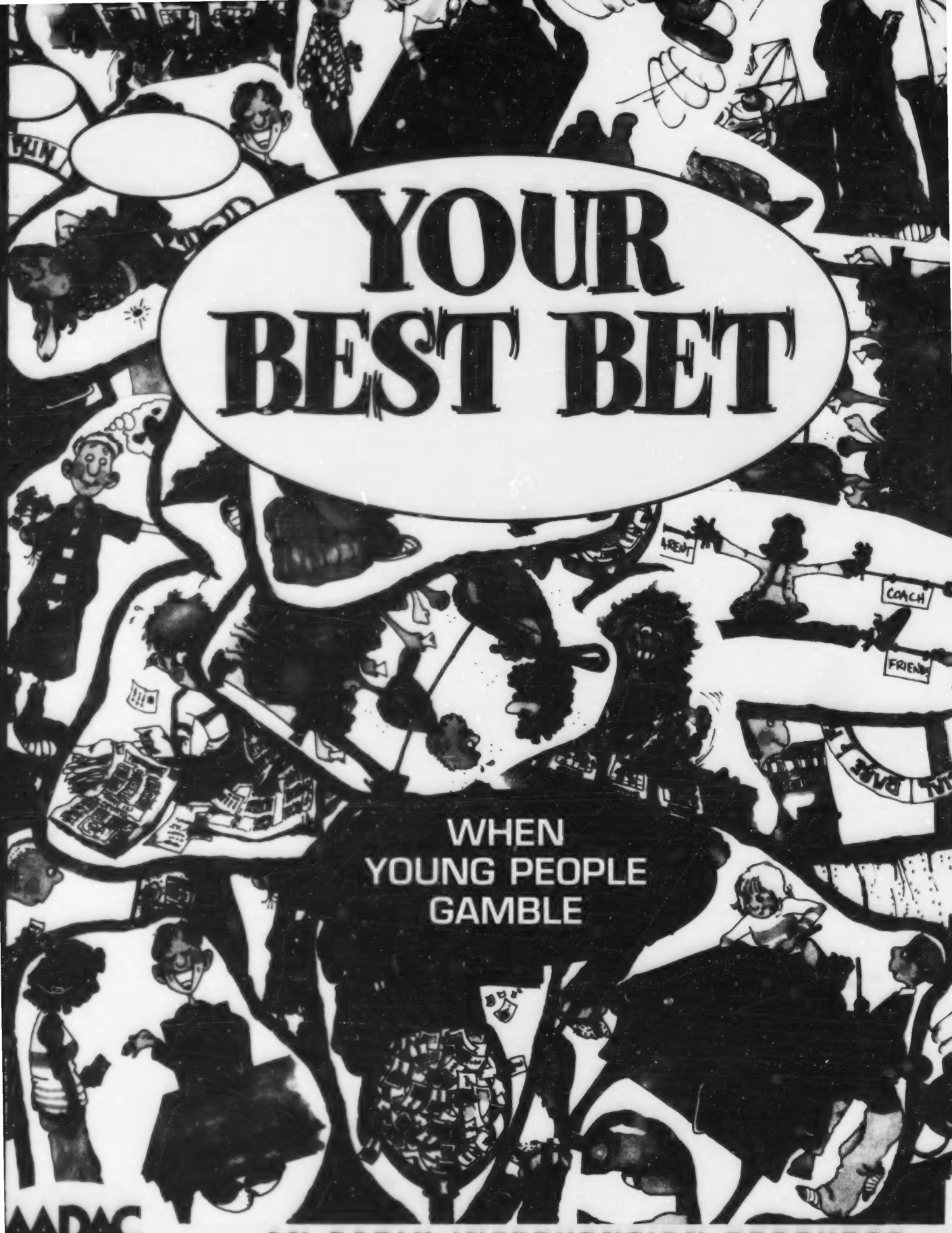
YOUR
BEST BET
WHEN
YOUNG PEOPLE
GAMBLE
COACH
FRIEND
AADAC
AN EARLY INTERVENTION RESOURCE

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or e-mail **rdm@aadac.gov.ab.ca** or go to **www.aadac.com**

ISBN 0-7785-0980-X

INTRODUCTION

- Gambling has deep roots in history and in almost every culture.
- It is only in the past 30 years that gambling and gaming activities have become more and more visible and acceptable in our society.
- This acceptance has been widespread, having an impact on both adults' and adolescents' gambling behaviour.
- It is important that adolescents receive the information necessary for them to make informed decisions. For example, they need to understand that gambling and betting are behaviours that carry some risk – risk that is greater than losing a dollar or two.
- Adolescents typically do not consider themselves gamblers – they think that gambling is only an adult activity that occurs in age-restricted locations. It is important that teens identify and define the term gambling, and its associated activities, for themselves.
- Young people use the terms betting, wagering, and daring when referring to their personal gambling habits. They will understand you better if you use these terms.

PURPOSE OF *YOUR BEST BET* RESOURCE

The purpose of this resource is to assist in the education of adolescents about the risks of gambling, allowing them to make wise decisions, choose positive paths and develop the ability to avoid and/or maneuver through high-risk gambling situations.

This is achieved through:

- being aware of betting and gambling risks
- recognizing personal betting behaviours
- skill building in maintaining personal safety and integrity
- developing supports within the community

USING THIS RESOURCE

The materials in this package are targeted at adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17. Every attempt has been made to ensure the materials are appropriate for most teens.

This kit may be used in health and life skills, mathematics, language arts, or any other program where the material is appropriate and adds value to an existing curriculum.

Components of this kit may be used alone or together; there are stand-alone elements to provide maximum flexibility. There is no formalized implementation plan. The components of the kit are intended to be integrated into your own curriculum in a way that best meets the needs of the adolescents you work with.

In this package you will find:

- background information on adolescent gambling
- student activities and curriculum-integrated materials, prevention and intervention strategies, ways to enhance resiliency in communities and students, and ways to assist adolescents in deciding to make changes
- how to help adolescents and their families when they decide to address a gambling problem
- additional resource suggestions

DEALING WITH SENSITIVE ISSUES

Teens who gamble at a level that causes problems, or are affected by someone else's gambling, are likely to find some of this material disturbing.

- It is important to be aware that some adolescents may be especially sensitive to some of the issues raised in this package, as it relates to themselves or their families.
- It is therefore critical that adolescents get the information needed in order to make healthy decisions and reduce unnecessary risk-taking.
- A supportive, non-judgmental approach to gambling will help young people be open to listening and participation.

THE THREE Rs OF HELPING ADOLESCENTS

Reflect

Always start with where the youth is at. Allow them to tell you what the problem is and how severe it is.

Reframe

When the teen has told you how they view the situation, reframe the information and ask them to confirm that you have understood what they are saying. Sometimes this takes several tries before the teen finds a way to say what they really mean. Be patient; this is hard work.

Respond

Be honest with the youth without being judgmental. The situation is not reflective of being a good or bad person; it is about a healthy or unhealthy lifestyle. Let them know help is available and that you will assist them in getting that help.

What are the odds?

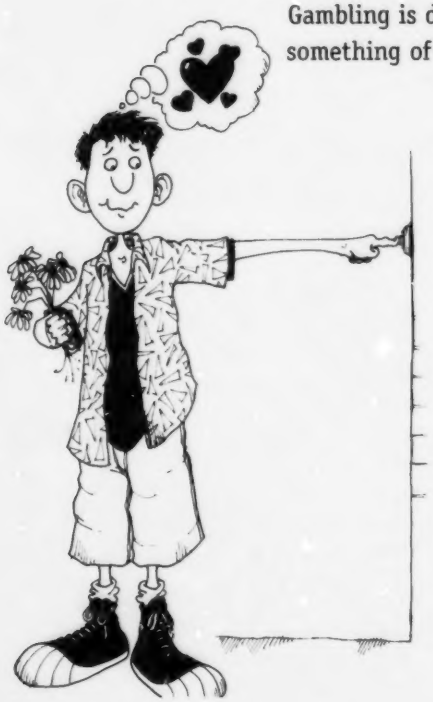
This question prompted me to stop buying lottery tickets. Not because:

- The odds of winning a jackpot on the 6/49 lottery are 1 in 14 million.
- I have never won anything on the 6/49.
- Winning numbers are drawn randomly.

I stopped buying lottery tickets the day after I found out my neighbour had won a million dollar jackpot. What are the odds of two people on the same street having a "big win"? Granted, my logic is flawed. But, gambling decisions are often emotional, based on flawed logic.

DARES, WAGERS, AND BETS – GAMBLING OR RISK-TAKING?

So, what are the odds that adolescents are gambling? We know adolescents take risks. They challenge themselves physically, emotionally and socially every day. Risk-taking is a positive attribute associated with leadership, success and an independent entrepreneurial spirit. Adolescents stake their money and personal possessions on dares, wagers, and bets. Are these activities risk-taking or gambling? They are both. Risk is defined as identifying the consequences and determining the probability or likelihood of them happening. Gambling is defined as the act of risking money, property, or something of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome.



Not every risk is a gamble.
Every gamble holds risk.

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Not every risk is a gamble.
Every gamble holds risk.

ARE ADOLESCENTS GAMBLING?

Like most of us, adolescents don't think of this risk-taking behaviour as gambling. When asked, teens will tell you gambling is an adult activity that occurs in age-restricted facilities, casinos, video lottery terminals (VLTs), and bingo halls. But adolescents do bet, wager and dare. They purchase fundraising and instant-win tickets, play card or board games with family and friends for money, and wager on the outcome of sporting events or personal skill competitions. For the majority, the winning and losing of money and possessions is secondary. Adolescents play because they enjoy the activity, the social interaction, and the challenge. (Wynne, 1996, p. 41.)

In a 1996 study done for the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission by Wynne Resources, for 77% of youth, risk-taking in the form of gambling remained relatively harmless. Fifteen percent of teens may be at risk for developing a gambling problem. Eight percent have a gambling problem. Problem gambling is a growing concern, and research indicates that adolescents are almost four times as likely to get into trouble with gambling than adults. (Wynne, 1996, p. 8.)

GAMBLING

Gambling is the act of risking money, property, or something of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome.

In the next few years, today's teens will be adults with access to credit and entrance to restricted gaming facilities. By investing in adolescents by providing them with information and skill-building tools, we increase the likelihood of these young people developing responsible risk-taking and social gambling habits.

ADULT GAMBLING

Most adults gamble. Gambling is becoming more socially acceptable. The revenue from gaming activities supports many community initiatives and charities.

These include:

- libraries
- museums
- sport and athletic events
- agricultural societies and clubs
- arts and culture groups
- wildlife and conservation projects
- public athletic facilities
- churches
- health and wellness initiatives
- seniors groups
- recreation, tourism, and historical resources

Licensed gambling has become a part of our everyday experience.

In support of charities, many of us have spent countless hours daydreaming. We furnish our dream homes; drive beautiful new cars; and ski behind the powerboats that are safe and secure in our wallets, waiting for the grand prize draw. We buy 6/49 tickets regularly, even though we know our chances of winning the jackpot are 1 in 14 million. We buy entrance to sporting and baby pools. Penny-a-point poker, bridge, rummy, hearts, and other games provide an opportunity to spend time with family and friends. Regardless of the words we use to describe it (bets, wagers, dares, risk-taking) gambling affects all of us. For most of us, the benefits provided by community and charitable groups, clubs and associations provide a better life. The entertainment and time spent with friends and family is invaluable.

Words like "betcha" are learned early in life, representing a way of demonstrating skill, knowledge and luck. Children often use gambling games to acquire and refine new skills. Protecting children from exposure to gambling is an impossible task. Helping children to become aware of their gambling activities, the benefits and the potential dangers, is a social responsibility. This is particularly true as this is the first generation to grow up in a culture where gambling is not only legal and acceptable, but also openly promoted.

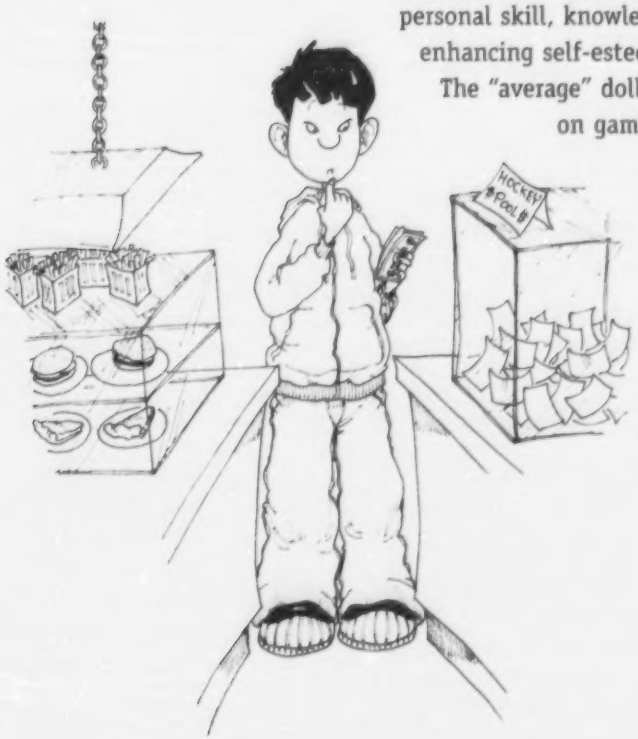
I think a lot of time, especially at bingo, is spent by seniors because they are alone. That is their social time. They come a little bit early and they visit with some ladies or men.

– parent in a focus group about adolescent gambling (Angus Reid, 1999, p. 18)

KIDS AND RISK

Adolescents are well informed about the hazards and legalities of smoking, drinking, using drugs and experimenting with sex. Few realize that gambling – whether it is betting, taking a dare or making a wager – has its own levels of risk.

The competitive nature of most adolescents makes pitting their personal skill, knowledge or ability against a wager a method of enhancing self-esteem and identifying themselves as winners. The "average" dollar amount an adolescent risks per month on gambling activities is equivalent to buying a single fast food meal.



What are teens really purchasing? Entertainment, the fun of sharing a risk with friends, and the opportunity to be a winner. This is social gambling. How, then, do adolescents, parents and teachers recognize when a young person has shifted from social gambling to problem gambling?

WHEN GAMBLING BECOMES A PROBLEM

For a small but significant number of adolescents, gambling, betting, wagering and risk-taking become an addiction that is just as powerful and destructive as drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Recognizing when the shift from social gambling to problem gambling has occurred is not easy. Somewhere along the way, the casual bet can stop being "just for fun."

When the line is crossed – and bets, wagers and dares become larger and more frequent – what had been "no big deal" and "just for fun" has become very serious. Gambling, like all addictions, begins to consume an individual's life. There are some warning signs that may indicate an adolescent may be struggling with a gambling problem:

- spending more time or money gambling than intended
- returning another day to win back money or possessions

- skipping school or work for reasons related to gambling
- arguing with friends and family about money and gambling
- borrowing or stealing money
- losing, selling or giving away possessions
- exaggerating or lying about the amount and frequency of wins
- getting excited, or depressed, about sports results and sporting events
- worrying about money and possessions
- gambling and the results of gambling become overwhelming.

Frequently, adolescents don't recognize the shift from social gambling to problem gambling. It is hard to recognize this shift, as many adolescents have trouble making the connection between their gambling behaviours and the subsequent negative impacts on their lives.

"The problem isn't gambling – the problem is lack of cash."

"The problem isn't gambling – people just need to get off my back."

"The problem isn't gambling – I need to get back my running shoes before anyone notices them missing."

MAKING CHANGES

Motivating adolescents to change destructive behaviours, whether related to tobacco, alcohol, other drugs, or gambling, is a challenge. For individuals to address an addiction of any sort, the motivation to change needs to come from within – motivation to change not just the behaviours but also the reasons behind the behaviour. Providing adolescents with information designed to inform, rather than direct or judge, behaviours has been a cornerstone in effectively reaching adolescents. This approach focuses on skill building as well as problem resolution.

GAMBLING – AN ADDICTION?

Problem gambling and substance abuse have much in common. In both cases, adolescents expect a mood change, providing both an escape and a way of coping with the realities of their lives. Regardless of the high price necessary to achieve the desired effect, each is perceived as a way of avoiding pain and increasing pleasure. As a result, young people often experience problems. Home life, relationships, work, school and recreation activities begin to suffer. Along with financial and legal difficulties, young people have difficulty coping, as they are no longer in control of their lives.

ADDICTION

The compulsion to continue engaging in an activity despite harmful consequences to oneself or others.

Problem gambling is frequently not considered an addiction because there are no tell-tale physical signs as there are with addiction to alcohol and other drugs. Gambling does not have a smell like liquor and tobacco, pupils don't dilate, and physical reactions can be credited to other things. Excessive gambling can result in exhaustion and physical manifestations of anxiety. The gambling "high" is a trance-like state that excludes the world around, resulting in a distorted sense of time and place.

"We have two minutes between classes, but when we are making a deal we stay for ten minutes. I go to class and everyone is working. I was still waiting for the bell to ring."

– adolescent respondent in Adolescent Gambling and Problem Gambling in Alberta study. (Wynne, 1998, p. 61)

WHY SOME AND NOT OTHERS – CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

In many cultures, gambling is more socially acceptable than either alcohol or other drugs. Most forms of legalized gambling have legal age restrictions. However, it is informal wagers, bets and dares that have the greatest impact on youth.

Many factors shape an adolescent's attitude toward gambling. These include:

- living and working in environments where gambling is a conspicuous activity
- experiencing gambling as the major focus of entertainment or recreation, in the family or social network
- experiencing an early win with a parent or an admired adult

"I worry about my kids and drugs and I worry about my kids and drinking, but I don't worry about my kids and gambling."

- parent in a focus group about adolescent gambling (Angus Reid, 1999, p. 11)

WINNING POPULARITY, RESPECT, HAPPINESS

Success is often defined as a healthy aptitude for risk and perseverance, allowing us to gain strength from setback and failure. Risk-taking is particularly attractive to adolescents as they seek to define their identities and prove themselves to their peers, their families and their communities. Winning and being a winner are important attributes that are valued by adolescents and adults alike. All of us feel good when we win.

For adolescents defining their identity, winning can come to be seen as a way to gain popularity, respect and happiness. Losses are explained away (the luck of the draw) or ignored. Wins are flaunted and worn as a badge of honour. The media provide daily reminders that money and material wealth can solve problems. Being "lucky" is the quickest way to achieving dreams, wealth and recognition.

"I like the excitement, knowing you're winning, knowing you're good."

- adolescent respondent in Adolescent Gambling and Problem Gambling in Alberta study. (Wynne, 1998, p. 45)

WHAT WE KNOW

- We know that about 2/3 of adolescents gamble. (Wynne, 1996, p. 8.)
- We know that about 1/4 of adolescents may have a gambling problem or could be at risk for developing a gambling problem.
- We know that adolescents are exposed to media messages, face developmental challenges, and participate in bets, wagers and dares.
- We also know that some teens are more resilient.

Resilient children:

- are male and female and come from all social and ethnic backgrounds
- believe themselves to be capable and competent, learning from experience
- believe that their lives have purpose and meaning and that they contribute in unique and meaningful ways
- are accountable for their personal actions and choices, with a sense of personal influence
- have strong intrapersonal skills, managing personal emotions through self-assessment, self-control and self-discipline
- have strong interpersonal skills, cooperating, negotiating, sharing, listening and communicating
- have the ability to respond to limits and consequences with responsibility, adaptability, flexibility and integrity
- base decisions on moral and ethical principles.

Resilient children have good problem-solving skills, and are task- and solution-oriented. They believe in their own effectiveness and assume responsibility for finding solutions to the problems they face. Being optimistic, they believe that things will work out well and obstacles will be surmounted. Resiliency does not protect adolescents from failure, disappointment or making mistakes. It provides them with the ability and skills to learn and try again. (Milstein & Henderson, 1996)

Adolescent problem gamblers:

- are more likely to be male
- are more likely to be Aboriginal
- are most often males who favour games of skill (pool, golf, bowling)
- are more likely to be smokers

- are more frequent and heavier drinkers of alcohol
- are more likely to use illicit drugs
- are more likely to admit to feelings of anxiousness, depression, and being worried or upset
- are more likely to have had their first gambling experience at a younger age (often before 10)
- are more likely to live in homes where one or both parents gamble regularly and openly
- are more likely to display poor school performance.

Adolescents who develop problems with gambling frequently suffer from low self-esteem and crave peer acceptance. Many are from homes where one or both parents gamble openly, and their first experience with gambling activities occurred at an early age. These young people – driven in their quest for achievement, competition, and success – display a low tolerance for mistakes or failure, demonstrating poor problem-solving and coping skills. Frequently these youth have illusions about the odds of winning and the laws of probability.

COSTS OF PROBLEM GAMBLING

The cost of adolescent problem gambling is still largely unknown. As adolescents, consequences can range from temporary overspending and preoccupation to psychological, social and legal problems.

Typically, problem gambling leads to denial, deception and lying, which undermine trusting relationships, integrity and individual self-worth. As problem gambling progresses, it replaces other activities and interests. The developmental process of adolescence suffers. The escape provided by gambling becomes a way of avoiding learning how to deal with difficult situations. Relationships, building self-identity, achieving at school, exploring career options, and developing personal interests and hobbies all suffer.

THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT

Like adult problem gamblers, adolescent problem gamblers are more likely than the general population to be frequent and heavy drinkers, to smoke, and to be depressed or have other emotional problems. (Wynne, 1996)

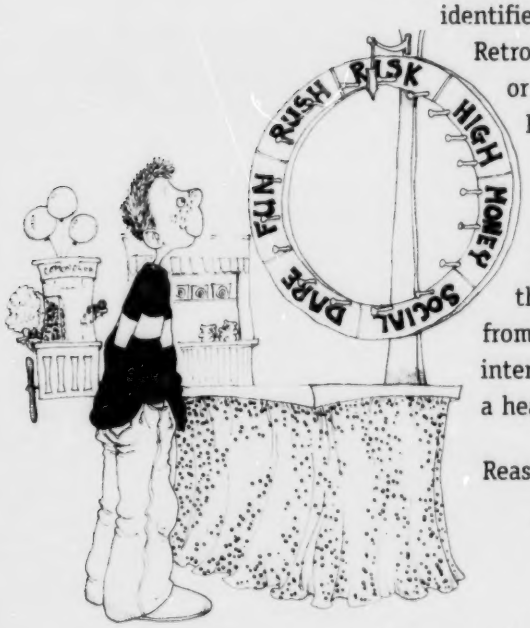
Unlike adult problem gamblers, adolescents do not have legal access to age-restricted gaming activities. Because teens do not hold the same financial assets and responsibilities as adults, the consequences of problem gambling are not always quickly identified. Adolescents gamble for entertainment or fun, because they enjoy the excitement and the challenge. Winning money is not the primary reason.

ONE MORE DIFFERENCE – THE BIG ONE

Adolescents differ from adult problem gamblers in one more way. Adolescents are not seeking or being referred for treatment or help even though the rate of problem gambling among adolescents is four times that of adults.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The largest unknown lies in the concern that teens with an established pattern of gambling may face increased difficulties as they reach adulthood and establish greater income, access to credit and entry to gambling facilities. In 1998, the average age of adults identified as being pathological/problem gamblers was 18 to 34. Retrospective studies of adults indicate that it takes ten years or more for a problem gambling disorder to develop. Frequently, these same individuals report an early introduction to gambling.



All of this indicates a need and responsibility to heighten awareness and educate our youth to recognize the shift from responsible to harmful risk-taking and from social to problem gambling. Prevention and early intervention will help students achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle, both now and ten years from now.

Reasons adolescents gamble:

- for entertainment or fun
- for excitement or as a challenge
- for the win

Reasons adults gamble:

- to win money
- to be entertained

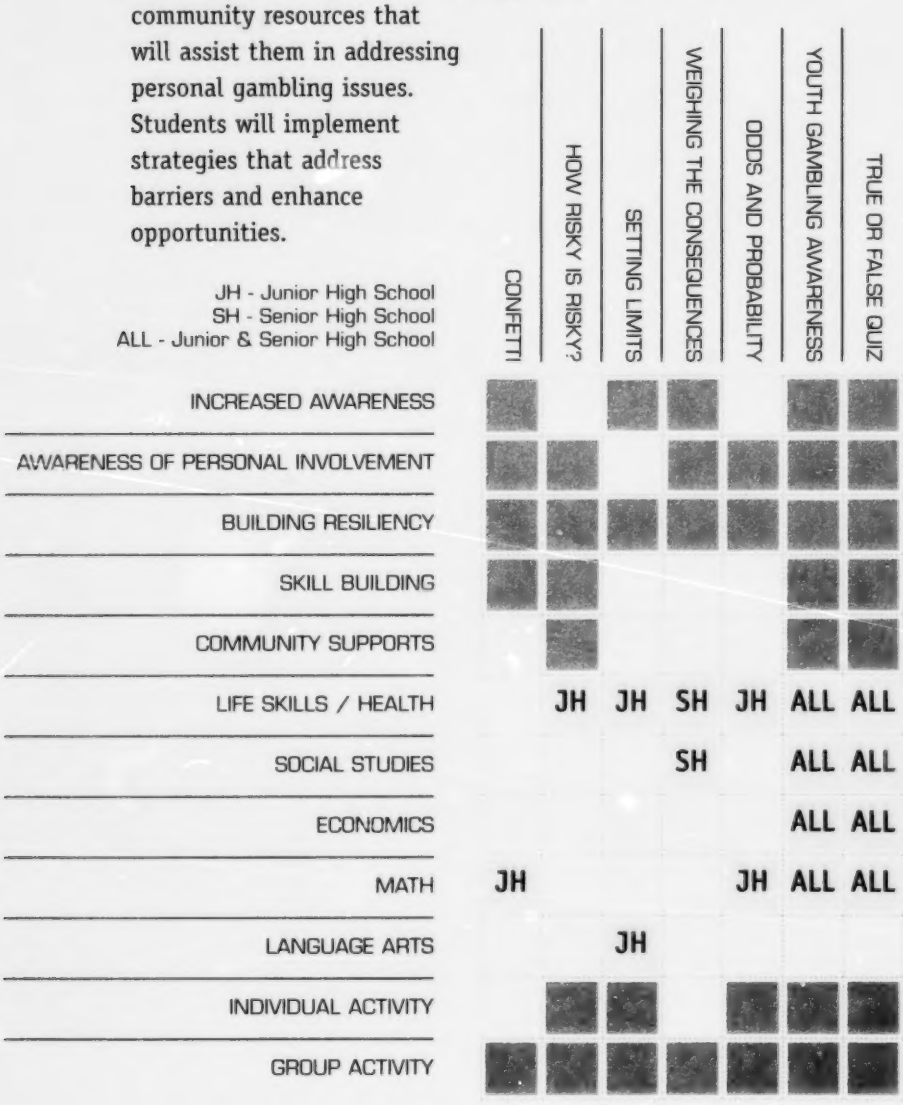
GAMBLING ACTIVITIES

Teens say they don't gamble. They think gambling is only an adult activity that takes place in age-restricted facilities. Adolescents say they BET, WAGER, and DARE. Understanding how teens describe and identify with gambling is the easiest way to introduce the subject to your teen group or class. There are a number of ways in which this can be accomplished. Ask them. Adolescents, through discussion, will acknowledge and identify the gambling activities in which they participate and are familiar with.

OBJECTIVES

1. AWARENESS – Adolescents are introduced to risks and behaviours of problem gambling, behaviours that may not yet be defined as gambling. Students will understand gambling from a conceptual standpoint, identifying the activities and terms used in relation to themselves.
2. PERSONAL RELEVANCE – Adolescents will develop an understanding and awareness of psychological and social influences surrounding decision-making with respect to gambling. This is accomplished through knowledge and skill development to use when confronted with gambling activities.
3. SKILL BUILDING – Adolescents will have identified personal gambling behaviours that may require change. Young people will identify barriers to change and plan how these will be addressed.
4. COMMUNITY SUPPORTS – With support, adolescents will seek out community resources that will assist them in addressing personal gambling issues. Students will implement strategies that address barriers and enhance opportunities.

JH - Junior High School
SH - Senior High School
ALL - Junior & Senior High School



TRUE OR FALSE GAMBLING QUIZ INSTRUCTIONS

TIME
30 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED
- **One copy of the "True or False" Quiz sheet for each student**
- **One copy of the answer sheet for each student**

OBJECTIVE

Adolescents will develop an awareness of gambling activities and the terms used as well as an understanding of the psychological and social influences surrounding decision-making with respect to gambling.

Summary:

- Are adolescents gambling? The answer is "YES." Adolescents bet, wager and dare; they purchase fundraising and instant win tickets, play card or board games for money, and wager on the outcome of sporting events or personal skill competitions.
- For the majority, the winning and losing of money is secondary. Adolescents gamble because they enjoy the activity, the social interaction and the challenge.
- Like most of us, adolescents don't think of these activities as "gambling."

Method:

- Have adolescents complete the True or False Gambling Quiz.
- Use the answer sheet found in the Activity Worksheets section to lead your discussion.
- Provide teens with copies of the answer sheet so they may continue to consider the commonly held misconceptions, myths and irrational thinking that often accompany gambling.
- This activity is helpful in introducing adolescents to the concept of gambling and is recommended as an introductory piece. This allows and encourages young people to define gambling for themselves within the context of their family environments, communities and day-to-day activities.

TRUE OR FALSE GAMBLING QUIZ

1. Gambling is a word that refers only to activities that happen in casinos, bars, and at racetracks. T F
2. Most junior and senior high students cannot be gamblers because they are too young. T F
3. The money most gamblers lose is balanced out by the money they win, over time. T F
4. Seventy-five percent of youth don't gamble until they are 18 years old. T F
5. If you buy a lottery ticket, the odds of winning the jackpot depend on how many tickets are sold. T F
6. If your parents buy you a lottery ticket for your 16th birthday and you win, you can collect the prize. T F
7. If you pick your own numbers in a game like 6/49 your chances of winning are better than if the computer picks them. T F
8. A person who plays video lottery terminals usually wins when the machine is "hot" (hasn't paid out for a long time). T F
9. Winning a big jackpot will solve the player's problems. T F
10. An experienced gambler can "feel" when a win is coming. T F
11. Gambling and risk-taking are the same thing. T F
12. A person who gambles too much doesn't hurt anyone but him/herself. T F
13. If you flip a coin nine times and it comes up tails each time, the chances that heads will come up on the 10th flip are 87%. T F
14. People who gamble never feel bad or depressed about the money they lost because they know they will win it back next time. T F

TRUE OR FALSE GAMBLING QUIZ ANSWERS & INFORMATION

All the answers on this quiz are FALSE. This quiz is designed to encourage examination of some commonly held beliefs about gambling.

1. Gambling is the act of risking money, property, or something of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome. Adolescents most frequently refer to these activities as wagering, betting or daring, not gambling. For many young people, gambling is an adult activity that happens in bars on video lottery terminals, at casinos and at racetracks.

2. Sixty-seven per cent of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 have gambled.

3. This is folklore and unsubstantiated; most gambling wins and losses do not balance out.

4. Sixty-seven per cent of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 have gambled.

5. The odds of winning a 6/49 lottery are determined by the fact that the six winning numbers are chosen at random from a pool of 49. The odds of winning are not influenced by the number of tickets sold.

6. It is illegal in Canada for an individual under the age of 18 to win a government lottery.

7. The numbers in a 6/49 lottery are drawn at random and the odds do not change when the numbers are selected by the computer.

8. VLTs (video lottery terminals) may pay out a jackpot at apparently regular intervals; this is based on a pattern that could span thousands or even millions of plays. A computer chip inside the machine selects outcomes randomly. A machine could "hit" three times in the same week, or go for six months with no large jackpot. The player has no better chance of winning the jackpot on a machine that hasn't paid out for three weeks than on a machine that paid out an hour ago.

9. Although large influxes of money can alleviate the stress many people feel, it does not solve the underlying problems.

10. Gambling implies an element of chance, with the outcome unknown. One cannot "feel" a win coming, one can only hope a win is coming.

11. To risk is to expose oneself to the chance of injury or loss. Gambling is defined as the act of risking money, property, or something of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome. Although every gamble involves risk, not every risk involves gambling, as money or possessions are not always at stake.

12. Gambling affects family, friends, and co-workers.

13. The chances of a coin coming up heads or tails on a single flip remain 50-50 regardless of the pattern established by previous tosses.

14. Gambling can lead to serious depression, anxiety, and suicide.

YOUTH GAMBLING AWARENESS ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

TIME
30 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED
· One Copy of Youth Gambling Awareness Activity for each student

OBJECTIVE

Adolescents will develop an awareness of gambling activities and the terms used, as well as an understanding of the psychological and social influences surrounding decision-making with respect to gambling.

Summary:

- Are adolescents gambling? The answer is "YES." Adolescents bet, wager and dare; they purchase fundraising and instant win tickets, play card or board games for money, and wager on the outcome of sporting events or personal skill competitions.
- For the majority, the winning and losing of money is secondary. Adolescents gamble because they enjoy the activity, the social interaction and the challenge.
- Like most of us, adolescents don't think of these activities as "gambling."

Method:

- Provide each teen with a copy of the Youth Gambling Awareness Quiz.
- This will provide a context for initial discussions in defining what gambling is and the frequency with which most adolescents gamble. You may find the Leader's Discussion Guide helpful in guiding this discussion.
- If you use this activity as a screening tool, it is important to approach the adolescent in a sensitive and supportive fashion. Guidelines and suggestions on how and where to assist teens in getting help are provided in When Help Is Needed, in the Leader's Discussion Guide, in this package on page 55.

An indicator of possible problem gambling

This adolescent gambling tool is meant to assist professionals who work with youth to identify teens with possible gambling problems.

- This tool can be used to help students begin to think about gambling and their participation in gambling activities.
- This activity can also be used as an initial screening tool to help identify youth that may need to be referred for further assessment.
- **This activity is not meant to be a comprehensive assessment or diagnostic tool, nor to form the basis of treatment planning.**
- A further assessment requires a specialized service to gather more information, in order to understand the adolescent's situation more fully, and to make treatment recommendations.

How the gambling awareness activity works

- Screening for problem gambling examines two aspects of gambling behaviour.
  - **Can the frequency of the gambling be considered excessive?** At this time, gambling two or more times per week is an indication that further assessment is needed. (Question 4)
  - **Are there significant negative consequences of gambling, either evident to the adolescent or evident to others who are closely associated with them?** Questions 5 through 10 relate to this indicator. One or more positive responses to items 5 through 10 could indicate the need for further assessment.
- Items 1, 2, 3, 11 and 12 are for information only and are not scored as part of the screening criteria.
- Items 1, 2 and 3 provide information about the range and kind of gambling activities the youth has engaged in during the past six months.

YOUTH GAMBLING AWARENESS ACTIVITY

1. Have you gambled in the last six months? Yes ❍ No ❍

2. In the past six months, have you participated in any of the following gambling activities? Check as many of these that are true for you.

- Played cards for money or other belongings ..... ❍
- Played other games of skill (golf, pool, board games) for money or other belongings ..... ❍
- Bet on sporting events ..... ❍
- Bought lottery tickets ..... ❍
- Played slot machines, video lottery machines (poker machines) ..... ❍
- Played pull-tab or scratch tickets ..... ❍
- Played bingo for money ..... ❍
- Played arcade or video games for money ..... ❍

3. List any other gambling activities you have participated in during the last six months that are not listed above.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. In total, how often do you participate in gambling activities?

- Once a week or less ..... ❍
- Two to three times a week ..... ❍
- More than three times a week ..... ❍

5. In the past six months, have you spent more time or money than you wanted to on any of these activities? Yes ❍ No ❍

6. Is gambling one of the main activities that you do for fun or excitement? Yes ❍ No ❍

7. In the past six months, has doing any of the above activities created problems for you? Yes ❍ No ❍

8. Do you sometimes miss school or other things that are important to you in order to gamble? Yes ❍ No ❍

9. In the past six months, have you been concerned about taking part in these activities? Yes ❍ No ❍

10. Has anyone expressed concern about your gambling? Yes ❍ No ❍

11. How often do your friends gamble?
    - More than you do ..... ❍
    - Less than you do ..... ❍
    - About the same as you do ..... ❍

12. How often do your family members gamble?
    - More than you do ..... ❍
    - Less than you do ..... ❍
    - About the same as you do ..... ❍

ODDS AND PROBABILITY INSTRUCTIONS

TIME
30 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED
- **Pennies**
- **What Are the Odds? worksheet**

OBJECTIVE

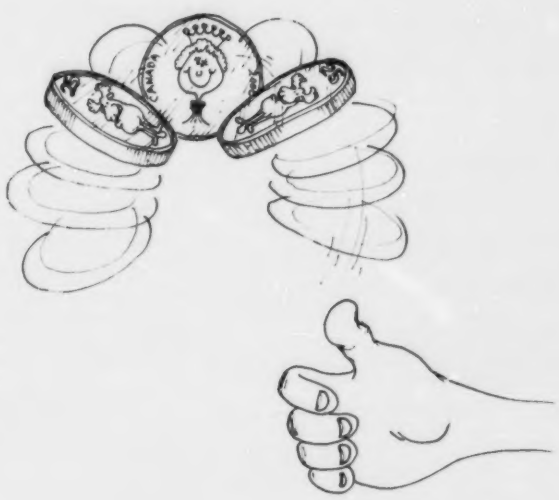
Adolescents will develop an understanding and awareness of psychological and social influences surrounding decision-making with respect to gambling. This will be accomplished through activities and discussion regarding: the mathematical principles of odds and probability, decision-making, values, and social and environmental influences.

Summary:

- The "odds of winning" and the "probability of winning" are terms we often associate with gambling activities.
- Research indicates that individuals who develop a problem with gambling frequently have illusions about the odds of winning and the laws of probability.
- Understanding the laws of probability, randomness, and independent events within the context of gambling activities will help adolescents become aware of the myths, misconceptions and irrational thinking that can accompany harmful risk-taking and problem gambling.

Method:

- Distribute pennies and copies of What Are the Odds?
- These simple probability exercises illustrate the realities of unfavourable odds.
- This allows teens to apply the mathematical law of averages and independent events and calculate the odds of winning – within the context of lotteries, bets, wagers and dares.



Discussion Starters:

1. Help adolescents understand the misconceptions and irrational thinking that are often associated with "odds," "probability" and "luck" as you work through the answers to the worksheet.
2. Using the Leader's Discussion Guide, choose the questions most appropriate to your teens. Some suggestions include:
   - Why do young people gamble?
   - Why is gambling legal?
   - How do you know if and when you have a gambling problem?

Continuing the Discussion:

To continue your discussion about gambling and adolescent gambling, a number of activities can be used.

- The activity titled "Confetti" introduces the idea of costs associated with "winning" in the context of random events and laws of probability.
- The activity titled "Setting Limits" provides students with the opportunity to identify types of risk and establish the difference between responsible and harmful risk-taking.

WHAT ARE THE ODDS?

Take your time – some of these aren't as simple as they seem!
Express all odds as percentages.

1. Suppose you and a friend flip a coin to see who is going to choose the movie. You call heads. What are the odds you will choose the movie?

_____

2. Based on these odds, about how many times would you expect to get heads if you flipped a quarter...
80 times?___ 700 times?___

3. With a partner, take turns predicting how many times a coin will come up heads out of 20 flips. Then do it and record the outcome. Whose guess was the closest?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. True or False? The more times you toss a coin, the closer the actual outcome (expressed as a percentage) will be to the odds.
T **F**

5. If you flip a coin nine times and it comes up tails every time, what is the chance that it will come up heads on the tenth toss?

_____

6. Bob buys several lottery tickets every week. If Bob always plays the same six numbers (his "lucky" numbers), will the odds of his winning stay the same or improve over time?

_____

7. A scratch-and-win game announces: "Every ticket is a chance to win $5,000." Each ticket costs $1. Does this seem like a fair game? What other information would help you decide?

_____

8. Study the following information about a scratch-and-win game, then use a calculator to answer the questions.

Number of scratch-and-win tickets for sale: 6,000,000. Cost of each ticket: $2

Prizes:

If you get...	You win...	Total Number of Prizes Awarded
3 Xs	$2	1,000,000
3 flags	$5	400,000
3 pirate hats	$10	150,000
3 ships	$20	30,000
3 jewels	$50	10,000
3 rings	$100	250
3 gold coins	$1,000	100
3 treasure chests	$10,000	13

a) Assuming that all tickets are sold and all prizes are cashed in, how much money is paid back to players as prizes?

b) What percentage of tickets pays more than $100?

c) What are the odds of winning the $10,000 prize?

d) What are the odds of winning the $2 prize?

e) If all the tickets are sold to separate buyers, how many people will come out ahead?

f) How many will break even?

g) How many will lose their $2?

h) On the back of each ticket it says, "Total prize payout, 57%. Overall chances of winning: 1 in 4." Do you think this is enough information about the odds? Explain.

9. Even when they know the odds are against them, many people still like to play gambling games. Suggest reasons for this.

10. Some people keep playing until they have lost everything - and then borrow money so they can play some more. Suggest reasons for this.

WHAT ARE THE ODDS? ANSWER SHEET

1. 50%

2. 80 times? about 40
   700 times? about 350

3. Note that it is common to expect a short sequence of events to reflect the odds. However, the odds refer to an average that may only appear over a large number of trials. Total all trials and outcomes for the groups. Quite likely, the composite outcome will be closer to the 50% probability than that of each smaller group.

4. True: As suggested by the "law of averages," also known as the "law of large numbers," the more times an event is repeated, the closer the actual outcome will be to the theoretical probability.

5. 50%. The odds that a single coin will come up tails are always 50%. The outcome of the previous trials does not affect the tenth trial in any way. The coin does not "remember" the previous outcomes. These are independent events: each toss has to be seen separately. A confusion between dependent and independent events often leads to "gambler's fallacy" or "magical thinking" – the belief that "luck" or probability follows a pattern that is not random.

6. They will always be the same (the odds of winning the 6/49 jackpot are 1 in 14 million). Every drawing of the winning numbers is an independent chance event. As with the coin toss, past outcomes have no influence over the next outcome. It doesn't matter if Bob plays the same or different numbers each time. The odds of his winning will always be the same.

7. To determine the odds, you will need to know how many tickets are being sold and how many $5,000 prizes will be awarded.

8.
   a) $6,855,000 or 57%

   b) 113 tickets out of 6,000,000 or .002%

   c) 13 in 6,000,000 or 1:461,538

   d) 1,000,000 in 6,000,000 or 1:6

   e) 590,363

   f) 1,000,000

   g) 4,409,637

   h) A payout table, such as the one shown in question eight, is needed in order to determine the odds of winning the larger prizes, if that is the potential buyer's main concern. It may be misleading to only give the odds of winning any prize, since so many of these involve merely breaking even.

9. Reasons may include: fun and excitement, the challenge, it's something to do, spending time with family and friends, etc.

10. Reasons may include: the hope of winning, illusions about the odds, the excitement of playing, etc.

Nova Scotia Dept. of Health. (1997). Drawing the Line Volume 2 Senior High.

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AADAC

WEIGHING THE CONSEQUENCES INSTRUCTIONS

TIME
30 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED
- **Flipchart/whiteboard**

OBJECTIVE

Adolescents will develop an awareness of gambling activities and the terms used, as well as understanding the psychological and social influences surrounding decision-making with respect to gambling. This is accomplished through activities and discussion regarding: decision-making, social and environmental influences.

Summary:

- Gambling is associated with both risk-taking and competition.
- As adolescents seek to define their identities and prove themselves to their peers, their families and their communities, risk-taking and competition are particularly attractive.
- To risk is to expose oneself to the chance of injury or loss. Gambling is defined as the act of risking money, property, or something of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome.
- Identifying the potential positive and negative consequences of taking emotional, financial and social risks provides teens with the tools necessary to recognize the shift from responsible to harmful risk-taking and from social to problem gambling.

Method:

- Have adolescents write or create scenarios that reflect situations of current relevance to them. Have students think about this in the context of a bet, wager, or dare.
- Choose one or more scenarios to read aloud to the group.
- Ask how the individual involved can decide whether he or she should take the risk.
- Draw a chart with WON and LOST heading each column. Have the adolescents identify what could be won and what could be lost.
- Ask them to assign a number from 1 to 10 to each consequence, then evaluate whether the risk is "worth it."
- The value assigned could be indicative of the severity of the consequence (death – very severe consequence with a value of 10) or the probability of the consequence happening (remotely possible with a value of 1). Clearly identify with your adolescents what is being measured.

- Individual evaluations may differ, depending on which positive or negative consequences they assign the most "value" to.

WON	LOST
Growth	Health
Experience	Safety
Friends	Approval
Respect	Respect
Money	Trust
Confidence	Freedom
Fun	Future options
Excitement	Comfort
	Face

Discussion Starters:

Discuss with adolescents the value of identifying potential consequences. Planning ways to respond to these consequences can help keep them safe. Help adolescents explore the idea that with risk can come great rewards as well as grave consequences. The rewards of gambling risks generally include spending time with friends and family, supporting good causes, and accepting a challenge that could be phrased as "I bet you can't get 90% on the next test." The grave consequences of gambling can include legal and financial difficulties, depression, loss of relationships, suicide.

Most adolescents are exposed to media messages, face developmental challenges, and participate in formal and informal bets, wagers, and dares. Yet some develop gambling problems while others do not. To help teens understand this the following questions may be helpful:

- Why do young people gamble?
- Do alcohol and other drugs compare with gambling?
- Isn't this really about money?
- How do I know if an adolescent is in trouble?
- Why do some adolescents get into trouble and others don't?

Continuing the Discussion:

To continue your discussion about gambling and adolescent gambling a number of activities can be used.

- The activity titled "How Risky is Risky?" provides adolescents with an opportunity to establish their own guidelines for acceptable levels of risk-taking.
- The activity titled "Setting Limits" provides adolescents with the opportunity to identify types of risk and establishes the difference between responsible and harmful risk-taking.

› Individual evaluations may differ, depending on which positive or negative consequences they assign the most "value" to.

WON	LOST
Growth	Health
Experience	Safety
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Continuing the Discussion:

To continue your discussion about gambling and adolescent gambling a number of activities can be used.

› The activity titled "How Risky is Risky?" provides adolescents with an opportunity to establish their own guidelines for acceptable levels of risk-taking.

› The activity titled "Setting Limits" provides adolescents with the opportunity to identify types of risk and establishes the difference between responsible and harmful risk-taking.

SETTING LIMITS INSTRUCTIONS

TIME
30 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED
- **Setting Limits worksheet**

OBJECTIVE

Adolescents are introduced to risks and behaviours of problem gambling, behaviours that may not yet be defined as gambling. Youth will understand gambling from a conceptual standpoint, identifying the activities and terms used in relation to themselves.

Summary:

- By definition, gambling involves taking risks.
- To risk is to expose oneself to the chance of injury or loss. Gambling is defined as the act of risking money, property, or something of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome.
- Adolescents take risks – they challenge themselves physically, emotionally, socially, and financially every day.
- As teens identify levels of risk, they can establish their own guidelines for responsible risk-taking. Understanding the differences between responsible and harmful risk allows adolescents to make decisions about their own gambling behaviours.

Method:

- Begin by asking adolescents to brainstorm different types of RISK. Write the word RISK on the board with the words, **social**, **financial**, **emotional** and **physical** surrounding it. Have teens identify specific risks they take in each category.
- Discuss with the adolescents how they determine how high a risk they are willing to take. One way of doing this is to determine the consequences of a behaviour and the probability or likelihood of these consequences happening. Consequences can be positive or negative.
- Brainstorm ideas about why some people take greater risks than others, using gambling as an example. The Leader's Discussion Guide can help guide this discussion.
- Provide students with the "Setting Limits" worksheet. In each category, ask students how they would "set their personal limit."

Discussion Starters:

1. As an adolescent do you have a tendency to hold back too much or go too far? In each case, what kind of advice could you give yourselves? When is it appropriate to push your limit, or "push the envelope"? When is it appropriate to "draw a line" and not push the envelope?

2. Choose the questions most appropriate to your adolescents. Some suggestions include:
   - What are we talking about when we use the term "adolescent gambling?"
   - Why do young people gamble?
   - Isn't this really about money?
   - How do I know if an adolescent is in trouble with gambling?
   - Why do some adolescents get into trouble with gambling while others don't?

The Leader's Discussion Guide has more question suggestions.

Continuing the Discussion:

To continue your discussion about gambling and adolescent gambling, a number of activities can be used.

- The activity Odds & Probability introduces the ideas of randomness, probability and independent events in identifying and understanding myths and misconceptions about gambling.
- The activity titled How Risky Is Risky? provides students with an opportunity to establish their own guidelines for acceptable levels of risk-taking.

SETTING LIMITS

Part A:

1. To prepare for a midterm math test, the most time I would spend studying would be:

❍ 30 min ❍ 1 hr ❍ 2 hr ❍ 3 hr ❍ 5 hr ❍ 10 hr ❍ 20 hr ❍ 30 hr

2. If I was playing cards with friends, the most I would bet would be:

Poker chips ..... ❍
Pennies ..... ❍
$1 ..... ❍
Extra spending money in my pocket ..... ❍
Money I could borrow and pay back the next day ..... ❍
Any money I could borrow ..... ❍

3. For a good time, I wouldn't do more than:

Watch TV at home ..... ❍
Go to a movie with a friend ..... ❍
Go to a party with just my friends ..... ❍
Go to a party where I didn't know most of the people ..... ❍
Go to a party and drink or smoke whatever was being passed around ..... ❍
Drive around town with kids who were high and had a habit of getting into trouble ..... ❍

4. To get the attention of a girl or boy I liked but didn't know, I wouldn't do more than:

Say hello ..... ❍
Try to start a conversation ..... ❍
Offer them something they liked to eat or drink ..... ❍
Call them on the phone and invite them to go somewhere ..... ❍
Wear the kind of clothes he/she liked ..... ❍
Anything she/he wanted me to do ..... ❍

Part B:

Think about each situation in Part A.
Would you be more likely to hold back too much or go too far?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Part C: When you feel yourself holding back too much, what can you do?

_____

_____

_____

Part D: When you feel yourself going over your limit, what can you do?

_____

_____

_____

Part E: Remember a time you crossed your "limit line." What happened?

_____

_____

_____

(Nova Scotia Dept. of Health. 1997. pp. 27-28)

HOW RISKY IS RISKY? INSTRUCTIONS

TIME
30 minutes

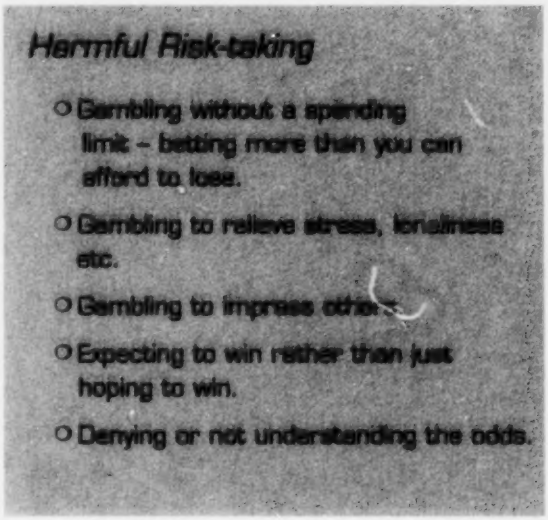
MATERIALS NEEDED
*** Materials needed to develop Public Awareness Campaign (e.g. poster paper, pens, markers etc.)**

OBJECTIVE

Adolescents are introduced to risks and behaviours of problem gambling, behaviours that may not yet be defined as gambling. Adolescents will understand gambling from a conceptual standpoint, identifying the activities and terms used in relation to themselves.

Summary:

- By definition, gambling involves taking risks.
- To risk is to expose oneself to the chance of injury or loss. Gambling is defined as the act of risking money, property, or something of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome.
- Adolescents take risks – they challenge themselves physically, emotionally, socially, and financially every day.
- Risk-taking is a healthy attribute, often associated with success and leadership. However, many of the risk-taking behaviours that involve bets, wagers and dares are not about the money, for adolescents. These activities are more about accepting a challenge and proving themselves to their peers, parents and communities.
- As teens identify levels of risk, they can establish their own guidelines for responsible risk-taking. Understanding the differences between responsible and harmful risk allows adolescents to make decisions about their own gambling behaviours.


Harmful Risk-taking
Gambling without a spending limit – betting more than you can afford to lose.
Gambling to relieve stress, loneliness etc.
Gambling to impress others
Expecting to win rather than just hoping to win.
Denying or not understanding the odds.

Method:

- Introduce adolescent gambling through the use of the True or False Gambling Quiz, or the Youth Gambling Awareness Activity. You may also ask them what they know about gambling and what activities they participate in.
- Brainstorm some of the reasons why people get into trouble with gambling activities.

HOW RISKY IS RISKY? INSTRUCTIONS

TIME
30 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED
· Materials needed to develop Public Awareness Campaign (e.g. poster paper, pens, markers etc.)

OBJECTIVE

Adolescents are introduced to risks and behaviours of problem gambling, behaviours that may not yet be defined as gambling. Adolescents will understand gambling from a conceptual standpoint, identifying the activities and terms used in relation to themselves.

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Harmful Risk-taking

- Gambling without a spending limit – betting more than you can afford to lose.
- Gambling to relieve stress, loneliness etc.
- Gambling to impress others.
- Expecting to win rather than just hoping to win.
- Denying or not understanding the odds.

Method:

- Introduce adolescent gambling through the use of the True or False Gambling Quiz, or the Youth Gambling Awareness Activity. You may also ask them what they know about gambling and what activities they participate in.
- Brainstorm some of the reasons why people get into trouble with gambling activities.

› Ask teens to identify, and list in general, what kinds of behaviours might suggest that bets, wagers and dares have shifted from social gambling to harmful risk-taking.

› Discuss with adolescents the known dangers of getting into trouble with drugs and alcohol. Ask teens if they think most people realize they can get hurt making bets and wagers.

› Suggest that adolescents help educate the public by designing a public awareness campaign. Remind the adolescents they don't want to send the message that all gambling is BAD, but they do want to help people recognize the signs of harmful risk-taking and learn how to set personal limits.

› Have each teen display or present their awareness campaign and discuss what they have learned about gambling and how they will set safe personal limits.

Guidelines for a Public Awareness Campaign

1. Who will be the target audience?
2. Decide on the message.
3. How will you get the message across?
4. How will the message be presented (posters, public service announcement, etc.)?

Discussion Starters:

1. Most adolescents are exposed to media messages, face developmental challenges, and participate in formal and informal bets, wagers, and dares. Yet, some develop gambling problems while others do not. Ask teens why this may be the case? Have young people identify what kinds of media messages, and public awareness campaigns they are exposed to every day?
2. Choose the questions most appropriate to your adolescents. Some suggestions include:
   - Why do young people gamble?
   - Isn't this really about money?
   - Do drugs and alcohol really compare with gambling?
   - How do I know if an adolescent is in trouble?
   - If gambling is so dangerous, why is it legal?

The Leader's Discussion Guide has more question suggestions.

Continuing the Discussion:

To continue your discussion about gambling and adolescent gambling a number of activities can be used.

› The activity Odds & Probability introduces the ideas of randomness, probability and independent events as a way to identify and understand the myths and misconceptions about gambling.

› The activity Setting Limits provides students with an opportunity to identify different types of risk-taking: social, emotional, physical and financial.

› Ask teens to identify, and list in general, what kinds of behaviours might suggest that bets, wagers and dares have shifted from social gambling to harmful risk-taking.

› Discuss with adolescents the known dangers of getting into trouble with drugs and alcohol. Ask teens if they think most people realize they can get hurt making bets and wagers.

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CONFETTI INSTRUCTIONS

TIME
30 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED
- **Large mixing bowl**
- **70 gram package of confetti**
- **prizes determined by the group leader**

OBJECTIVE

Adolescents will develop an awareness of gambling activities and the terms used, as well as an understanding of the psychological and social influences surrounding decision-making with respect to gambling. This will be accomplished through activities and discussion re: odds/probability, decision-making, values, social and environmental influences.

Summary:

- The "odds of winning" and the "probability of winning" are terms we often associate with gambling activities.
- Research indicates that individuals who develop a problem with gambling frequently have illusions about the odds of winning and the laws of probability.
- Understanding the laws of probability, randomness, and independent events within the context of gambling activities will help students become aware of and identify the myths, misconceptions and irrational thinking that can accompany harmful risk-taking and problem gambling.

Method:

- Empty the confetti into the bowl and mix it up.
- Have a teen place a black dot on one piece of confetti, and return it to the bowl.
- Have each adolescent mix up the bowl by running their fingers through the confetti. This allows young people to get a feel for the number of individual pieces.
- Ask the adolescents if they would be willing to pay for the chance to draw the piece of confetti with the black dot from the bowl. The price of playing is negotiated by the leader and the group. The return for winning is a prize that the leader chooses that is important to the participants (we recommend it be substantially larger than the "cost of playing").
- Adolescents close their eyes and choose one piece of confetti.
- Ask the young people to estimate how many pieces of confetti are in the bowl. (There are approximately 110,000 pieces.) Ask the adolescents what the probability of winning is? (It is 1:110,000.)

Discussion Starters:

1. Tell the adolescents that the odds of winning the prize were 1:110,000. Now tell them the odds of winning the grand prize in the Lotto 6/49 are 1:14,000,000.

   - The cost of playing confetti was whatever was decided by the group, the cost of playing 6/49 is $1.00. Was it worth it? Ask teens why they think people pay to play when the odds against winning are so great.

   It would take 127 bags of confetti in a giant bowl for the odds of this exercise to be the same.

   - Discuss how the "cost" of playing is usually much smaller than the potential "benefit" of winning. Does this mislead people? Do people forget that playing did cost them something?
   - Brainstorm some of the myths and misconceptions people have about winning the lotteries, and other random games. (e.g. "Somebody has to win." Is this true?)

2. Choose the questions most appropriate to your adolescents. Some suggestions include:

   - Is gambling really a concern for adolescents?
   - What are we talking about when we use the term "adolescent gambling"?
   - Who gets into trouble with gambling?
   - Why do young people gamble?

The Leader's Discussion Guide has more question suggestions.

Continuing the Discussion:

To continue your discussion about gambling and adolescent gambling, a number of activities can be used.

- The activity Odds & Probability introduces the idea of determining the odds within the context of gambling activities.
- The activity Setting Limits provides students with the opportunity to identify types of risk and establishes the difference between responsible and harmful risk-taking.

Discussion Starters:

1. Tell the adolescents that the odds of winning the prize were 1:110,000. Now tell them the odds of winning the grand prize in the Lotto 6/49 are 1:14,000,000.

   - The cost of playing confetti was whatever was decided by the group, the cost of playing 6/49 is $1.00. Was it worth it? Ask teens why they think people pay to play when the odds against winning are so great.

   It would take 127 bags of confetti in a giant bowl for the odds of this exercise to be the same.

   - Discuss how the "cost" of playing is usually much smaller than the potential "benefit" of winning. Does this mislead people? Do people forget that playing did cost them something?
   - Brainstorm some of the myths and misconceptions people have about winning the lotteries, and other random games. (e.g. "Somebody has to win." Is this true?)

2. Choose the questions most appropriate to your adolescents. Some suggestions include:

   - Is gambling really a concern for adolescents?
   - What are we talking about when we use the term "adolescent gambling"?
   - Who gets into trouble with gambling?
   - Why do young people gamble?

The Leader's Discussion Guide has more question suggestions.

Continuing the Discussion:

To continue your discussion about gambling and adolescent gambling, a number of activities can be used.

- The activity Odds & Probability introduces the idea of determining the odds within the context of gambling activities.
- The activity Setting Limits provides students with the opportunity to identify types of risk and establishes the difference between responsible and harmful risk-taking.

LEADER'S DISCUSSION GUIDE

LEADER'S DISCUSSION GUIDE

IS GAMBLING REALLY A CONCERN FOR ADOLESCENTS?

› In 1996, research from the *Adolescent Gambling and Problem Gambling in Alberta* report (Wynne, 1996) indicated that one in four adolescents is experiencing problems related to gambling behaviours.

› Twenty-three per cent of adolescents were considered to be at risk or to have already developed a gambling problem. This rate is cause for concern as it is one of the highest found in Canada, double the reported numbers in some jurisdictions.

› Few adolescents actually seek out or are being referred to treatment services.

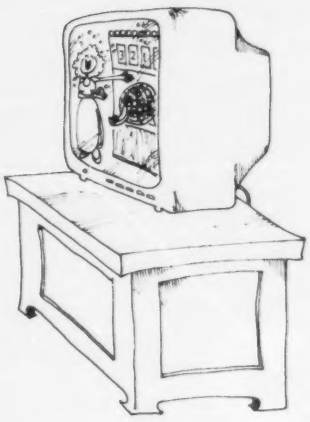
› The concern is that gambling has become an accepted part of our social structure and, unless prevention and intervention programs are put in place, the rates of adult problem gamblers will increase significantly as today's youth mature. This is of particular concern as the majority of adults experiencing gambling problems in 1998 were between the ages of 18 and 34 years.

› Whatever the level of gambling, youth need solid information and skills to deal effectively with gambling issues as they move toward adulthood.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THE TERM "ADOLESCENT GAMBLING"?

› Gambling is not a term adolescents use when describing their behaviour. Gambling is considered to be an adult activity that occurs in age-restricted facilities. Adolescents tend to use the terms betting, wagering and daring, and do not consider these activities to be "gambling," even though money and possessions are won and lost. Gambling is defined as "risking money or possessions on an activity in which the outcome is unknown."

› Adolescents' preferred gambling activities include:



- Raffles and fundraising tickets
- Instant-win or scratch tickets
- Card games and board games with family or friends for money
- Games of skill such as pool, golf, bowling, darts, or arm wrestling for money
- Bingo
- Lottery tickets (6/49 and Super 7)
- Playing for keeps
- Arcade or video games for money
- Sports lottery games
- Formal sports pools sponsored by charities
- Break-open or pull-tab tickets
- Flipping coins

(Wynne, 1996, p. 62)

WHO GETS INTO TROUBLE WITH GAMBLING?

There is no typical profile of an adolescent problem gambler. Research shows that males are more likely to gamble than females. Adolescents who have identified a gambling problem are also likely to share some of the following characteristics:

- They had an early first gambling experience, often before the age of 10. This frequently includes a memory of a "big" win.
- Their early gambling experiences were in the company of parents or other trusted and admired adults.
- At least one of their parents gambles regularly and openly.
- They like taking risks, but they can't stand to make mistakes or to fail at things.
- They have low self-esteem, and have a strong need to be accepted by their peers.

WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE GAMBLE?

- Adults and adolescents gamble for different reasons.
- Adults typically state they gamble for two primary reasons: first, to win money and secondly, as a form of entertainment.
- Adolescents list the following reasons for gambling:
  - as entertainment or fun
  - as excitement or as a challenge
  - to win money
  - to support worthy causes
  - in order to do things with friends
  - out of curiosity
  - because they are good at it
  - as a hobby
  - to distract themselves from everyday problems
  - to be alone

ISN'T THIS REALLY ABOUT MONEY?

- Adolescents rank winning money well below entertainment and excitement as a reason for gambling.
- On average, adolescents spend $3.22 per month on gambling activities.
- Money enables adolescents to play. However, on a "good" day, $20.00 will allow an adolescent to play all day. On a "bad" day, $20.00 will only last 10 minutes. (Wynne, 1996)
- Research indicates that adolescents with gambling problems remain involved with sports, clubs, schools and other community activities. These activities, however, tend to take a lower priority as gambling behaviours increase.

DO ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS COMPARE WITH GAMBLING?

- People often don't think of problem gambling as an addiction, possibly because, unlike alcohol and other drugs, there are fewer telltale signs.
- Problem gambling and substance abuse share some similarities:
  - Adolescents expect a mood change, and it is perceived as a way of avoiding pain and increasing pleasure.
  - Gambling, like substance abuse, is usually not the problem but a symptom of the problem.
- Addiction of any sort is the compulsion to continue engaging in an activity, despite harmful consequences to oneself or others.
- Adolescent problem gamblers are more likely than non-gamblers to be smokers, frequent drinkers of alcohol, heavier drinkers, and users of illicit drugs (notably marijuana).
- The correlation between problem gambling and substance abuse for both adolescents and adults identifies the necessity of increased awareness, prevention and early intervention programs. Community education is necessary to convince affected persons and their families that adolescent problem gambling is as real and as destructive as substance abuse.

HOW DO I KNOW IF AN ADOLESCENT IS IN TROUBLE?

› Gambling may be a problem for an adolescent when:

- More time and money is spent on gambling than intended.
- An adolescent goes back another time or day to try to win back money or possessions that have been lost.
- An adolescent feels bad about the way he/she gambles or about what happens when he/she gambles.
- Winning becomes so important that the adolescent lies, telling others he/she won when he/she didn't.
- An adolescent wants to stop betting or gambling money, but doesn't think he/she can.

- Signs of gambling are hidden from parents and friends.
- Sports results are excessively monitored or an individual becomes overly excited or depressed at the outcome of sports events.

› Contained in this package is a Youth Gambling Awareness Activity on page 23. This is not meant to be a comprehensive assessment or diagnostic tool. Its purpose is to determine whether sufficient evidence of a problem exists to warrant further assessment.

WHAT ABOUT PARENTS?

› Parents play a primary role in the development of skills, supports and attitudes that help adolescents avoid or resolve a gambling problem.

› Problem gamblers indicate they had their first experience gambling, often associated with the memory of a win, at an early age (often as young as 10 years). (Wynne, 1996)

› These activities often were in the company of parents or other trusted and admired adults.

› Adolescent problem gamblers are frequently from homes where one or both parents gamble regularly and openly.

WHY DO SOME ADOLESCENTS GET INTO TROUBLE WHILE OTHERS DON'T?

- For some people gambling fulfills unmet needs for approval, recognition, challenge or competition.
- Some young people experience a "rush" or a "high" when they gamble. This can be a powerful reinforcement for continuing to gamble and can place these individuals at risk. Other young people will try to recoup losses, which only increases their losses and traps them in a losing cycle. This is often related to low tolerances for frustration and loss.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I KNOW A YOUNG PERSON HAS A GAMBLING PROBLEM AND WON'T ADMIT IT?

- Encouraging adolescents to define both the problem and the solution is a way to help them recognize, and do something about, their present or potential problems. It is especially useful with adolescents who are either reluctant to change or ambivalent about changing.
- Sometimes the greatest help we can offer is assisting an adolescent to resolve ambivalence and move along the path toward change.
- Strategies most helpful to adolescents include those that are supportive and persuasive, not authoritative, argumentative, coercive or demanding.
- Encourage change from within, rather than imposing an external demand for change from an adolescent.
- One of the most useful ways to start a conversation with an adolescent who does not admit to a gambling problem is to ask them to tell you some of the good things that happen for them when they gamble. If you listen to them while they list the benefits, usually, without any prompting from you, they will start to tell you some of the drawbacks. If you need to prompt this, it is more effective to say "What are the not-so-good things?", rather than "What are the bad things about your gambling?"

FIVE WAYS TO HELP:

1. Express Empathy

Acceptance of the adolescent and the problem facilitates change. Understand the situation from the adolescent's point of view. What may appear to be a "problem" for you may not yet be identified as a problem for the adolescent. What is a "problem" for the adolescent may appear to be insignificant to you. Let the adolescent define the problem and reflect back to the adolescent what you are hearing. "The bets you have been making on hockey results are getting out of control." "You owe more than you can pay off and you are concerned about what your friends will think." Always check with the adolescent to confirm that you have heard what they've tried to say. This is not always a quick process and can sometimes take several attempts before the adolescent can find the right words to articulate the problem.

Remember that AMBIVALENCE is normal. Ambivalent feelings are often a time of self-discovery. Recognizing that there might be a problem is very difficult and sometimes painful. This is the adolescent's problem; it needs to be identified and defined by the adolescent, at a pace that the adolescent can manage.

2. Develop Discrepancy

It is important to help adolescents become aware of the discrepancy between their goals and desires and their behaviours. Awareness of consequences, real and potential, is important, but consequences that conflict with important life goals favour change. It is up to the adolescent to present the arguments for change. It is important to remember that change is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon. It is a question of degree. Even when we believe change would be a good idea for an adolescent, it is important to either withhold our personal views or present them honestly and openly in a non-threatening manner. "I think it would be a good idea to change your gambling activities, but what do you think about this?" This places emphasis on the adolescent's freedom of choice. Asking open-ended questions helps the teen explore their own reasons for their gambling behaviour.

Remember: labels are counterproductive. They tend to trap adolescents within the name they are given.

3. Avoid Argument

As adolescents ourselves, we learned it was usually non-productive to argue with our parents and other adults. Frankly, they just didn't "get it." As much as times have changed, in this regard, things have

remained the same. Argumentative confrontations with adolescents are as non-productive today as they were 20 years ago.

4. Roll with Resistance

Resistance is a signal which shows that an adolescent may be ready to make changes. Resistance is momentum and this can be used to good advantage. Perceptions about cause and effect, consequences, and potential dangers regarding gambling can be shifted when new ways of looking at things are explored with the adolescent. Imposing your own values or ideas can result in increased resistance.

5. Promote Self-Efficacy

Belief in the possibility of change is an important motivator for adolescents. To believe in the possibility of change, adolescents must first believe in themselves and their personal value, skills, and ability to choose and carry out personal change. When adolescents can identify the change that is required, they are capable of implementing this change.

LICENSED GAMBLING

Some forms of gambling are licensed by the government. To play these, you have to be of a minimum age, and the government regulates the people who organize these games. Here are examples of games that are regulated by the government and games that aren't.

Licensed Gambling

- Lotteries
- Sport lotteries
- Coin slot machines
- Video lottery terminals
- Casinos
- Bingos
- Raffles
- Pull-tickets
- Horse racing

Informal Gambling

- Joining a pool on the outcome of a sports game
- Guessing who will win at cards or a board game
- Flipping baseball or hockey cards for keeps
- Pitching pennies
- Placing wagers or bets for money or possessions on games of skill or knowledge, or daring someone

- The availability of gambling has increased for many reasons, including:
  - participation in gaming activities as a popular form of entertainment,
  - more legal gaming activities are available
- Legalized gambling has enjoyed considerable debate over the past few years. Gaining a full understanding of both sides of the issue allows students to make healthy, positive decisions.
- Some licensed games are highly regulated and most adolescents do not report participating in these activities.
- Lotteries, sport lotteries, raffle tickets and pull-tabs are less regulated and may be more accessible to youth. These items are often used as gifts to children and adolescents.

Arguments in Favour	Arguments Against
Gambling is best controlled when it is legal. If gambling is prohibited, people will do it anyway, and this promotes lawlessness, feeds organized crime and places a burden on the legal system and law enforcement agencies.	Legalized gambling leads to increased problem gambling, which in turn leads to increased crime, especially in the form of theft, fraud and embezzlement.
Only a small percentage of the population has a problem with gambling; a portion of gambling profits can be set aside for education, prevention and treatment for these people.	Prevention efforts are often eclipsed by the more powerful social forces that encourage gambling. Only a minority of problem gamblers ever come forward for treatment. For every problem gambler, many more friends, relatives, and colleagues experience the impact of someone's problem gambling.
Gambling profits represent a significant contribution to the economy, funding worthy projects and helping governments tackle their fiscal problems, while also providing a boost for local businesses.	Gambling revenues can be important resources that overshadow the less obvious social costs. As promoters of gambling games, beneficiaries of profits, regulators of the gambling industry, and protectors of the public good, provincial governments and other institutions can be in a conflict-of-interest position.
Legalized gambling is preferable to other means of government fund-raising, such as increased taxes.	It is almost impossible to weigh the real costs and benefits of legalized gambling, because there are so many hidden and far-reaching social costs, including gambling addiction, crime, and the promotion of unhealthy social values.

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GAMBLING ONLY BECAME LEGAL IN THE LAST 50 YEARS

Historically, gambling has been defined as playing games of risk or chance, which involves staking money or other possessions on the outcome. Nearly all societies in every known period of civilization have entered into gambling activities.

Early Games of Chance:

- Archaeologists in Africa, Asia and Europe have found objects that appear to be the forerunners of today's dice.
- The ancient Egyptians played a guessing game where two people stood back-to-back and extended an odd or even number of fingers. A third person announced the results and kept score. (Nova Scotia Dept. of Health, 1997, Vol. 1, p. 129)
- Early dice, called "astragals" or "knucklebones," were made from the anklebones of sheep. The Greeks first used astragals for divination, then later used them to play a gambling game.
- In the ancient country of Lydia in Asia Minor, the ruler gave dice to his people during a famine, to take their minds off their hunger.
- The Greeks called "night or day" when they tossed shells that were black on one side and white on the other.
- Roman coins had the head of the god Janus on one side and a Roman galley on the other. When they tossed the coin, they called "head or ship." The Romans also bet on chariot races and gladiators' duels.
- During the Middle Ages, inns along the old Roman roads provided food, lodging and entertainment, including gambling.
- Playing cards evolved from tarot cards, which were used for both playing and fortune telling. The first European card deck dates to 14th century Italy. Card games became popular throughout Europe, and Christopher Columbus brought a deck on his first voyage to the New World.

MY STUDENTS ARE PRETTY WELL INFORMED. WHAT KINDS OF QUESTIONS CAN I EXPECT?

1. *How do I increase the odds of winning at gambling?*

   Players can pick the games that decrease the rate at which they lose (e.g. some table games), but for most people there is no legal way to increase the odds of winning.

2. *Does gambling hurt low income earners more than higher income earners?*

   This is a difficult question to answer because in the general population we don't know whether proportionately more low income earners are gambling or not.

3. *Do you (the teacher) gamble? If so, why? How do you know you don't have a problem with gambling?*

   It is best to answer the question directly. Many people gamble. Gambling is not a problem for everyone.

4. *Are free draws or cashless casino nights considered gambling?*

   Many schools, community clubs and associations operate these activities occasionally, with entry forms that require no payment or purchase. This is not considered gambling because there is no financial risk. However, some people believe that these games mimic gambling and could be introducing young people to the idea of taking a chance.

WHEN HELP IS NEEDED

Gambling is the act of risking money, property, or something of value on an activity with an uncertain outcome. For many adolescents, pitting their personal skill, knowledge or ability against a wager is a way of enhancing self-esteem and identifying themselves as winners. For a small but significant number of adolescents, betting, wagering and daring shifts from being "just for fun" and "no big deal" to very serious – becoming even more serious as young people reach adulthood and gain access to credit and entrance into restricted gaming facilities.

1. For many, the information gained through the activities and follow-up discussions used throughout this package will provide the insight and support necessary for young people to make healthy decisions about their personal gambling behaviours.
2. For some, confiding in, and seeking support from, a trusted adult will be helpful. In these situations, adolescents need to know their concerns are valid and important. Show the young person how important she or he is by finding a private place to talk.
   - Try to be open-minded and non-judgmental about what the adolescent is saying. Teens are more receptive to messages that provide information and options; messages that are directive or judgmental are often met with resistance and defensiveness.
   - Know your limitations. Get an assessment of the problem through a professional trained to determine levels of risk. It is not your responsibility to assess and treat an adolescent with a gambling problem, but you can support these young people by referring them to other professionals.
3. For a significant number of adolescents, bets, wagers and dares have already become problem gambling. A professional assessment and treatment plan should be considered for the youth that you believe may have a gambling problem.
   - Teens need to know where to find help, but are often reluctant to make contact with these resources. Handing an adolescent a telephone number is frequently not enough. The teen may need your help in determining what to say, what to ask for, and how to explain the problem. Role-playing or scripting this with the adolescent is helpful.
   - Whenever possible, accompany the adolescent to further assistance.
   - If you collaborate with a skilled professional, you provide the adolescent with multiple levels of support. In partnership

with the addictions counsellor, you show the teen that they are important. Remember that when adults show that they believe teens can succeed, they help those teens be more resilient. Adolescents seeking assistance with a gambling problem need to know people are available to them. Let them know you are there to listen and help, even if they are getting help from someone else.

- Teens seeking help with gambling-related problems will need you when treatment is drawing to a close. The trusted adult who helped a young person identify a problem, and assisted him or her in seeking help with the problem, will continue to be a primary support while the teen establishes new and healthier habits.

4. Be patient with adolescents who refuse help, or refuse to acknowledge a problem; they may still be considering the options. Keeping lines of communication open will be helpful.

   - Gambling-related problems are often a family problem. Support and encouragement for family members to become part of the treatment process is vital for adolescent success.

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WHO TO CALL

GAMBLING HELP LINE (ALBERTA)

1-800-665-9676

This 24-hour Help Line is available 7 days a week.
The toll-free number provides information and referral services, and is operated by the Distress Centre for the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

www.aadac.com

AADAC YOUTH SERVICES

Edmonton (780) 422-7383
Calgary (403) 297-4664

Or contact your local AADAC office, listed in the white pages of the telephone directory under **Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.**

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS (GA)

Edmonton (780) 463-0892
Calgary (403) 237-0654
Lethbridge (403) 329-7467 (PAGER)

Check your telephone directory for local GA contact numbers. Gam-Anon is for those who have family members who are problem gamblers. Gam-Anon chapters can be reached through GA chapters.

CANADIAN FOUNDATION ON
COMPULSIVE GAMBLING – ALBERTA

1-866-461-1259 (IN ALBERTA)
www.cfcgambling.org
email: cfcga@cfcgambling.org

LOCAL CONTACTS:

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